



Billing Code: 4510-43-P

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Mine Safety and Health Administration

**Proposed Extension of Information Collection; Ground
Control for Surface Coal Mines and Surface Work Areas of
Underground Coal Mines**

[OMB Control No. 1219-0026]

AGENCY: Mine Safety and Health Administration, Labor.

ACTION: Request for public comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a pre-clearance request for comment to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. This request helps to ensure that: requested data can be provided in the desired format; reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized; collection instruments are clearly understood; and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. Currently, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) is soliciting comments on the information collection for Ground Control for Surface Coal Mines and Surface Work Areas of Underground Coal Mines.

DATES: All comments must be received on or before [INSERT

DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments as follows. Please note that late, untimely filed comments will not be considered.

Electronic Submissions: Submit electronic comments in the following way:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:**
<https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments for MSHA-2021-0039. Comments, including attachments, submitted electronically to *<https://www.regulations.gov>* will be posted to the docket with no changes. Because your comment will be made public, you are responsible for ensuring that your comment does not include any confidential information that you or a third party may not wish to be posted, such as your or anyone else's Social Security number or confidential business information.
- If your comment includes confidential information that you do not wish to be made available to the public, submit the comment as a written/paper submission.

Written/Paper Submissions: Submit written/paper submissions in the following way:

- **Mail/Hand Delivery:** Mail or visit DOL-MSHA, Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances, 201 12th Street South, Suite 4E401, Arlington, VA 22202-5452. Before

visiting MSHA in person, call 202-693-9455 to make an appointment, in keeping with the Department of Labor's COVID-19 policy. Special health precautions may be required.

- MSHA will post your comment as well as any attachments, except for information submitted and marked as confidential, in the docket at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: S. Aromie Noe, Acting Director, Office of Standards, Regulations, and Variances, MSHA, at MSHA.information.collections@dol.gov (email); (202) 693-9440 (voice); or (202) 693-9441 (facsimile).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Section 103(h) of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (Mine Act), 30 U.S.C. 813(h), authorizes MSHA to collect information necessary to carry out its duty in protecting the safety and health of miners. Further, section 103(h) requires that every operator of a coal or other mine establish and maintain records, make reports, and provide required information to the Secretary of Labor (Secretary). Section 101(a) of the Mine Act, 30 U.S.C. 811(a), authorizes the Secretary to develop, promulgate, and revise as may be appropriate, improved mandatory health or safety standards for the protection of life and prevention of injuries in coal or other mines.

Each operator of a surface coal mine is required under 30 CFR 77.1000 to establish and follow a ground control plan for highwalls, pits, and spoil banks that is consistent with prudent engineering design and which will ensure safe working conditions. The mine operator is required by section 77.1000-1 to file the ground control plan with the appropriate District Manager. The mining methods employed by the operator are selected to ensure highwall, pit, and spoil bank stability. In the event of a highwall failure or material dislodgment, there may be very little time to escape possible injury; therefore, preventive measures must be taken. Each plan is based on the type of strata expected to be encountered, the height and angle of highwalls and spoil banks, and the equipment to be used at the mine. The plan is used to show how the mine operator will maintain safe working conditions around the highwalls, pits, and spoil banks. Each plan is reviewed by MSHA to ensure that highwalls, pits, and spoil banks are maintained in a safe condition through implementation of sound engineering design.

II. Desired Focus of Comments

MSHA is soliciting comments concerning the proposed information collection related to Ground Control for Surface Coal Mines and Surface Work Areas of Underground Coal Mines. MSHA is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information has practical utility;
- Evaluate the accuracy of MSHA's estimate of the burden related to the information collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used in the estimate;
- Suggest methods to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- Minimize the burden of the information collection on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Background documents related to this information collection request are available at <https://regulations.gov> and at DOL-MSHA located at 201 12th Street South, Suite 4E401, Arlington, VA 22202-5452. Questions about the information collection requirements may be directed to the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION section of this notice.

III. Current Actions

This information collection request concerns provisions for ground control for surface coal mines and

surface work areas of underground coal mines. MSHA has updated the data with respect to the number of respondents, responses, burden hours, and burden costs supporting this information collection request from the previous information collection request.

Type of Review: Extension, without change, of a currently approved collection

Agency: Mine Safety and Health Administration

OMB Number: 1219-0026

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit

Number of Respondents: 287

Frequency: On occasion

Number of Responses: 287

Annual Burden Hours: 1,962 hours

Annual Respondent or Recordkeeper Cost: \$545

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the proposed information collection request; they will become a matter of public record and will be available at <https://www.reginfo.gov>.

Song-ae Aromie Noe,
Certifying Officer.